DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 666 SP 036 006

AUTHOR McCree, Herb
TITLE Post-Career Military as an Alternative Pool of Teacher Candidates.
PUB DATE 11 Nov 93
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, November 10-12, 1993).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alternative Teacher Certification; Elementary Secondary Education; *Military Personnel; Military Training; Retirement; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Recruitment; Urban Education
IDENTIFIERS *Second Careers

ABSTRACT

A shortage of teachers exists in many areas, and the severe under-representation of minorities in teacher preparation programs has exacerbated the problem of supplying urban schools with needed personnel. Post career military personnel represent a prospective pool of alternative teacher recruits to redress existing urban teacher shortages. Career enlisted military personnel are highly trained in skills that are directly transferable to the civilian sector such as personnel management, resource allocation, high level technologies, counseling, and training skills. Participation in postsecondary educational opportunities for enlisted service members has reached an all time high. Considered as a group, post-career military personnel possess characteristics such as the belief that all can learn, the ability to function under stressful conditions, a strong sense of dedication to community, pride and self-confidence, and a desire to excel. Because of these factors and a concern for military veterans, the formulation of a national teacher certification policy applied to veterans could prove beneficial. There has been interest in such a policy on the part of government agencies, in the public domain, and in professional circles. At the same time, there have been concerns regarding certification. Some studies have indicated that military personnel are interested in teaching as a second career. Studies have also indicated that military retirees who are second career teachers have overall satisfactory performance, experience no special problems, and possess adequate administrative and pedagogical skills. (Contains 16 references.) (JB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Post-Career Military as an Alternative Pool of Teacher Candidates

ED 383 666

Herb McCree

Memphis Center for Urban Partnerships

College of Education

Memphis State University

Paper presented at the annual meeting of
the Mid-south Educational Research Association,
New Orleans, La, November 10-12, 1993

The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the College of Education or the University.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H McCree

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SB36006

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INTRODUCTION

In recent years public dissatisfaction with schools, as a result of widely published critical reports such as A Nation at Risk, has increased. Increased attention and public debate has precipitated various reform initiatives and improvement schemes. One topic of discussion that comes as close as any to achieving a consensus is the issue of teacher shortages in urban schools. Urban schools are in dire need of more male teachers, especially minority males, and minority teachers in general, with the greatest need in math and science. This paper is an examination of a narrow and specifically defined prospective pool of alternative teacher recruits to redress existing urban shortages.

BACKGROUND DEVELOPMENT

The projected requirement for teachers in America between 1987 and 1992 was 1.5 million, with an approximate shortfall of 800,000 newly trained teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1987). The percentage of traditional college students majoring in education declined from 21% to 9% between 1975 and 1984 (Stoddard, 1991). The opening up of job opportunities for women and minorities in various fields that were previously closed to them has accounted for a dramatic drop in interest in the teaching profession since the early 1980s (Congress, 1988 p.17).

The indication is that not only has there been a serious shortage of teachers but the severe under-representation of minorities in teacher preparation programs has exacerbated the current problem in supplying urban schools with needed personnel. A 1987 member survey by the America Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) found that the ethnic composition of college students in elementary and

secondary teacher preparation programs was: 90% white, about 4.4% black, 2% Hispanic, and 1.8% Asian (AACTE, 1987). Women have historically represented a majority of approximately 70% in the teaching profession (Congress, 1988 p.17). This accounts for the minority status accorded to male teacher candidates in many areas, particularly urban.

AN ALTERNATIVE POOL

The existence and importance of alternative pools of teacher candidates has been recognized and addressed by various writers. One alternative source for teacher candidates has been identified as "early retirees, including technical experts from the armed services,...(Stoddard, 1991)." Robert A.Chin (1989) describes military retirees as an untapped pool of technology teachers. Maryland's Teacher Recruitment Office has developed immediate strategies to draw from alternative sources such as: early retirees from laboratories, research centers, utility and manufacturing companies, and military bases (Smith, 1989). Non-traditional pools of prospective teachers will vary with area conditions such as the presence of a military base (TACTE, 1988).

DISCUSSION

Of particular interest in discussing alternative sources of teacher candidates are post-career military personnel. It has been suggested that there are many problems in considering these men and women as a resource pool to draw from (Smith, 1989). It may be that some of these concerns stem from traditional image problems encountered by military personnel in transitioning back to the civilian sector and are not fully supported by empirical data. The stereotypical, swaggering, macho,

disciplinarian, order-barking soldier has become virtually obsolete. As American society has evolved so has the citizen-soldier. The days when the soldier was a merely an instrument for applying violence and destruction have been superseded by technology and its attendant developments. Long gone are the musket and bayonet, now replaced by stealth bombers and spy satellites. The changes that have taken place have created a fairly unique and valuable alternative source of teacher candidates. A brief examination of some of these changes will help in understanding the development and characteristics of this population.

CHANGES IN MILITARY TRAINING AND REQUIREMENTS

As military training requirements changed so did the educational level and the intellectual skills needed to complete that training. Technology and social forces have redefined the military's mission, composition, and methodology. The percentages of soldiers receiving combat specific training (traditional soldiering skills) in the Civil War was 93.2% but by 1968 only 12% of our military was trained for combat specific skills with approximately 95% being trained in skills that are directly transferable to the civilian sector (Glick, 1971).

Career enlisted military personnel today are highly trained in personnel management, resource allocation, high level technologies, and counseling and training skills. Today, our modern all volunteer armed forces have the highest levels of education and technical competence in history. In 1964 roughly 70% of enlisted recruits had high school diplomas. By 1987 this had risen to 93% with another 3% having GEDs and about 7% possessing some postsecondary education

prior to enlistment (ACE, Oct., 1988). Another indicator of increasing levels of intellectual ability is the rise in the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) scores. The proportion of new recruits scoring in AFQT Categories I and II (above average) rose from 29% during 1977-80 to 41% in 1987; during the same time frame, below average (Category IV) scores dropped from 28% to 5% (ACE, Oct., 1988). Not only has entry level quality increased, but the pursuit of educational attainment while on active duty continues to support a trend of higher intellectual ability in this population.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND VETERANS AS LEARNER

Participation in postsecondary educational opportunities for enlisted servicemembers has reached an all time high. The best estimate of active duty military personnel enrolled in postsecondary course work is at least 400,000 (ACE, Oct., 1988). This is not as surprising when considering that, not only is this activity allowed but actively encouraged by the services. Not only are more servicemembers striving for higher education, more are reaching the goal. From fiscal year 1980 to 1986 the total number of bachelor's degrees earned by Army personnel increased by 9% and there was a 26% increase in associate degrees. In 1987 the total number of degrees earned by all active duty military personnel was 19,277 associate degrees, 6,037 Bachelor's degrees, and 7,019 Graduate degrees (ACE, Oct., 1988).

Post-military educational pursuits reveal some differences that may be attributed to the military culture. Veterans tend to be more mature and self-confident than other college students. This translates into some

important academic differences. One major finding in a study conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) was that veteran students are superior achievers when compared to non-veteran students (Frederiksen & Schrader, 1950). Other studies suggest that the ability to perform in academic settings by veterans will be underestimated by ACT or high school percentile rank, and mean differences between veteran and non-veteran students' first semester grade point averages are found to be statistically significant (Paraskevopoulos & Robinson, 1969). The veteran is usually older and possesses more work experience than other students and may often be awarded credit for some military training. Veterans will constitute a substantial portion of college enrollments into the foreseeable future. Projections are for a 25% reduction in active duty forces by 1995, and America's colleges will be the first stop for many of these veterans (Williams & Pankowski, 1992).

SUITABILITY

Perhaps one of the most important characteristics possessed is the general philosophy of learning that is instilled in the servicemember. LaBarre (1985) states that "The veteran enters the academic environment with the knowledge that success in education is attainable irregardless (sic) of his/her previous academic accomplishments." What better endorsement could there be for a teacher than the operationalized belief that everyone can learn?

Considered as a group, post-career military veterans have a proven work record and a documented ability to function under adverse conditions. Military members are evaluated in all aspects of their

performance from the day they enter basic training. Promotions, educational opportunities, and continued service are all predicated on satisfactory performance and behavior. The career military veteran will have years of direct and indirect teaching experience, will have meaningful exposure to multi-culturalism, a strong sense of dedication to community, pride and self-confidence, and a strong desire to excel.

NATIONAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Economic factors occurring in the 1970s and 1980s may account for the fact that the services were able to recruit more enlistees that would have traditionally entered higher education or civilian employment out of high school. These servicemembers are now approaching retirement and will need to be reassimilated by society. Military veterans are produced by national policy. The vast training and experience of these veterans constitutes the human component of the "peace dividend". While some differences exist between the service branches, there is coherent and consistent policy that governs all facets of military life. There is no corresponding national policy on either education in general or teacher licensure.

The lack of standard criteria for producing teachers has produced concern for teacher quality and prompted the National Education Association (NEA) to examine the implications of irregular certification policies established state by state (NEA,1986). Alternative and emergency teacher licensure programs are a common remedy in dealing with critical shortages. Forty-six of the fifty states permit the issuance of substandard, limited, or emergency certificates to allow academically

unqualified people to teach; at least twenty states issue emergency certificates to candidates without bachelor's degrees (Stoddard, 1991).

Because military veterans are a national concern, the formulation of a national teacher certification policy applied to veterans could prove beneficial. A national veterans licensure program could incorporate some aspects of successful state programs such as the mentoring program in Los Angles as discussed by Stoddard (1991).

The estimated 250,000 veterans that will retire in the next twelve years represent a valuable resource that has never existed in its current form. Will America be able to effectively recapture this human capital? Edward B. Glick (1971), while discussing Project Transition, asked some questions that are even more pertinent today. Project Transition was a program designed to assist veterans in moving from the military back into the civilian community. Glick wondered if rigid employment criteria might prevent both the veteran and the employer from benefiting from the military training that had been given.

> Externally, there is society's slavish worship of "credentials," which often gets worse as one moves from dark blue to light blue to white-collar employment. Obviously, degrees, certificates, licenses, diplomas, and apprenticeships are important, and I am not suggesting their total elimination. But what I am saying is this: for programs such as Transition to succeed, society will have to exhibit much more understanding, flexibility, and compassion than it has in the past (p59).

It may be that rigid licensure and traditional teacher preparation requirements will prevent many veterans from entering the teaching field. While there is a generally accepted feeling that military veterans would provide an alternative source of teacher candidates; has there been any

official governmental or public recognition of the fact? Although there appears to be a shortage of writing specifically addressing the topic, there have been some very pointed discussions. A move toward utilizing post-career military members was initiated in 1986 by William Bennett, then Secretary of Education, and Casper Weinberger, then Secretary of Defense, who signed a formal agreement intended to encourage military veterans to enter teaching as a second career. Bennett said: "Many men and women who served in uniform have developed excellent leadership and teaching skills. If they will consider turning some of their experience and knowledge to teaching, it would be a good thing for our schools, our children and our nation (Nyjordet,1991 p2)." There continues to be public interest in the development of military retirees and veterans as educators. The editors of the New Republic address the use and employment of the 250,000 service personnel that will retire in the next twelve years. In an editorial entitled *Back to School* , the need for successful male role models in our schools, particularly inner-city schools is addressed by suggesting military veterans fill those roles. "If a large fraction of these people were to go into teaching in the public schools, they could bring a sense of order and achievement to the young victims of decayed family life (New Republic, Ed., Sept 28, 1992)".

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

An important question to ask would be: are military veterans interested in teaching? Watt (1987) found in a study of the attitudes military personnel have toward teaching as a career, that strong positive attitudes toward teaching were present. This also suggests that teacher

recruitment programs addressing military personnel would be generally successful.

Would those military veterans that went into teaching be as successful as has been suggested? It may be too early to reach a firm conclusion regarding this question. A study of second career teachers from military backgrounds was conducted in 1992 with some interesting findings. These findings indicate that military retirees have overall satisfactory performance, no special problems, and possess adequate administrative and pedagogical skills. The primary conclusion is that military retirees are a good source of quality teachers and that alternative certification of this group can produce teachers whose performance level is equal to or better than first career teachers who enter teaching through traditional undergraduate programs (Parker, 1992).

There are currently some programs in place to help active duty military personnel meet licensure requirements. Programs like the Servicemembers Opportunity College are now offering courses in education through a cooperating network of colleges to help prepare military personnel for careers in teaching. Unfortunately, not all personnel are served by this program and some duty assignments preclude participation in off-duty education programs. The Department of Defense has introduced *Troops to Teachers*, a program that allows eligible veterans with degrees a $5000.00 stipend to obtain a teaching certificate. The program also provides grants to Chapter One schools of up to $50,000.00 for two years to defray salary, if the school hires a qualified veteran.

CONCLUSION

There is no suggestion or attempt to dilute the quality of the teaching force. It is acknowledged that not all veterans would be suitable teachers. Every effort to screen candidates should be used to maintain quality. Since the veteran's behavior, both personal and professional, is well documented, that documentation should facilitate the selection of the best candidates. Many veterans will have undergraduate degrees but most will not be in education. Veterans without degrees could follow a different track to licensure. The military retiree will be used to certification requirements and understand the need for continuing education. Alternative and probationary licensure programs that carry college course work as a requirement will not dissuade the motivated veteran.

Research Implications

To date it appears that no systematic study has been done on the quantity, quality, or scope of formal training that a career enlisted servicemember will have received by the end of 20 years of active duty or the cumulative effects of thousands of hours of informal education. The American Council on Education (ACE) has compiled an extensive listing of formal military training courses (commonly referred to as the ACE Manual) and offers recommendations for the amount of higher education credit that should be offered for successful completion of selected military courses. This does not encompass the less formal and cumulative educational effects possible from constant training. It also does not take into account the educational experience acquired from exposure to the varied cultural experiences that come from world travel

and diverse assignments.

The vast population represented by active duty and retired enlisted personnel has received only cursory attention. The veteran as an adult learner and as educational resource material should be examined more closely. Additional research of post-career military veterans in teacher preparation programs and those already in teaching positions should yield valuable information for use in the development of new policies at both state and national levels.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AACTE (1987). Teaching teachers: Facts & figures. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Washington D. C.

American Council on Education, (1988, Oct.). Joining forces: The military's college enrollments. Monograph No. A1410-13

Chin, R. (1989). Military retirees: An untapped pool of technology teachers. Technology Teacher, 48 (6), 31-33.

Congress of the United States, House Committee on Education and Labor (1988). Educational policies and practices: Their impact on education, on at risk students, and on minority teachers. U.S. House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, Second Session. Washington, D. C.

Editors, New Republic Back to School Sept. 28, 1992

Frederiksen, N., & Schrader, W. (1950). Adjustment to college: A study of 10,000 veterans and non veteran students in sixteen American

colleges. Princeton: Educational Testing Service. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED058856).

Glick, E. B. (1971). Soldiers, scholars, and society. Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear Publishing Co.

LaBarre, A. A. (1985). Veterans as students: A review of the literature. Unpublished manuscript. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED263319).

NEA Monograph (1986). Irregular teacher certification policies. What research says about. Series, Number 3. National Education Association, Washington, D.C.

Nyjordet, S. (1991). Teaching as a new career for military personnel. Bureau of Naval Personnel. Washington, D. C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED341680).

Paraskevopoulos, J. & Robinson, L. (1969). Comparison of college performance of cold war veterans and non veterans. College and University, 44 (2). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ000011).

Parker, W. (1992). An evaluation of the performance of retired military personnel who begin teaching as a second career. An unpublished dissertation completed at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va.

Stoddard, T. (1991). Los Angeles united school district intern program: Recruiting and preparing teachers for an urban context. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, D. C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED343905).

TACTE (1988). Programs of promise. A summary of current programs

focusing on the recruitment of minority candidates to careers in professional education. Tennessee Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Appalachia Educational Lab., Charleston, W. Va.

Watt, D. (1987). Selected military attitudes toward a career in teaching: A potential source of teacher candidates. A paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Mobile, Al. Nov. 11-13, 1987.

Williams, V. & Pankowski, M. (1992). The military's challenge to continuing higher education. Journal of Continuing Higher Education 40 (2) p. 26-29.